

any fuss, other than two Magpies (*Gymnorhina dorsalis*) heard giving a brief morning carol.

However, the Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*), which are very numerous and tame in Albany, seem to have had some very unpleasant shoeks. They were roosting on roofs and various vantage points not very far from the Senior Primary School in the main street when the light began to go and the air became colder. The leaders apparently decided it was time for roosting and after a great commotion led the flocks down towards the harbour. This decision took some time and darkness caught the two or three flocks some hundreds of metres from the shore line. They all settled on the grass—most on the Parade Street Soccer Ground—and remained there quite silently. When the light increased again the flocks took off and circled the centre of the town about fifty metres in the air for some time. Finally tiring of this the birds settled on buildings again but not on their accustomed perches or buildings. They favoured high ridge caps and had an unmistakable air of discomposure for the remainder of the day. One must be sympathetic with the seagulls for not only were they unable to reach their sleeping areas before darkness but were not allowed to go to sleep and to eat it all, their usual lunch hour feed of crusts and scraps of food on the school playground did not eventuate. The children all ate lunch in school and naturally crusts went into dustbins.

H. O. WEBSTER, Albany.

Departure Date of the Bridled Tern in Shark Bay.—Serventy *et al.* (*The Handbook of Australian Sea-Birds*, 1971, p. 228), give the departure date of the migratory Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*) as late February in the Perth area and April at Green Islets and the Abrolhos Islands. By a mere fluke I was able to determine the exact day and almost the hour when they left Slope Island, Shark Bay this year (1974).

On Sunday, February 24 my wife and I were on the island fishing most of the morning and noticed the terns seemed more agitated than usual, flying to and fro and settling on the rocks for only a few seconds at a time, and calling to each other incessantly. Only a small number seemed to be present so we guessed they were preparing to leave. We left the island at 11.45 a.m. and returned at 2 p.m., intending to take some photographs of the birds with a new 250 mm. lens I had just bought. However, not one bird was in sight and although we drove out there daily for the next week not a tern did we find.

—ROBERT C. MITCHELL, Hastings, N.Z.

Discovery of the Western Whipbird at Hopetoun.—The known distribution of the Western Whipbird, *Psophodes nigrogularis*, in Western Australia has been documented by Serventy and Whittell (*Birds of Western Australia*, 1967). It has been found at Two Peoples Bay and in mallee country around Borden and Gnowangerup and its most easterly location was hitherto 120 kilometres east of Borden near the Fitzgerald River.

On November 6, 1974 whilst visiting Hopetoun with members of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union engaged in compiling a list of birds in the Fitzgerald National Park I heard a Western Whipbird calling near the coast road 3 km east of the town, and on November 9, two birds were observed and the identification confirmed. Subsequently a third bird was heard calling on the road to Ravensthorpe, 32 km from Hopetoun, by Mrs. J. Seabrook and Mrs. J. Clark. The known range is thus extended eastwards by 80 km.

The habitat was dense thickets of Round-leaved Moort, *Eucalyptus platypus*, and in the area close to Hopetoun this was supplemented by low coastal heath. All areas where the birds were found were composed of dense mallee regrowth resulting from fire.

An examination of tape recordings of the songs of these birds and

those of Two Peoples Bay, and comparison with recordings from South Australia shows that there is little regional variation. Such consistency over a distance of some 1,240 km suggests the existence of further colonies of these birds around the little known coastline of the Great Australian Bight.

—F. N. ROBINSON, Helena Valley.

A Third Nesting Station of the Pelican in Peel Inlet.—Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) have in recent years established two nesting stations in Peel Inlet, south of Mandurah—on Creery I. and Nirimba Cay (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 9 (4), 1964: 80-84). Prior to about 1962 the southernmost nesting colony known in Western Australia was Pelican I. in Shark Bay. Now a third nesting station has been discovered in Peel Inlet, on a sand island created as a result of spoil from dredging the Yundurup Canals Scheme. The island came into existence in 1972, and is one mile from the eastern shore of Peel Inlet just south of the Murray River delta at Yundurup. It is known locally as Sand I., White I., or as Joan Watters I.

Naturalists first became aware of the colony on July 7, 1974. Several of us, including Julian Ford, Ron Templeton, Tony Bush and myself, took Professor Charles Sibley, of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, Yale University, on an excursion to Peel Inlet. Noting with the field-glasses an unusually dense concentration of Pelicans on the island we decided to make a closer inspection. To our surprise we found the birds were nesting. There were two groups of nests on the eastern slope of the islet. The more southerly group, evidently a slightly earlier laying, contained 47 nests—one egg in 3 nests; 2 eggs in 41 nests; and 3 eggs in 3 nests. The second group, close by, comprised 41 nests—one egg in 25 nests; 2 eggs in 15 nests, and 3 eggs in one nest. In addition there were 83 eggs scattered above the tide line, not in nests. All were fresh and cold. The Pelicans waddled off their nests as we landed, at 1.15 p.m., but immediately returned to the nests when we embarked in our dinghy at 1.20 p.m.

We were unable to visit the island again until September 8. In the interim, as we were informed by Mrs J. L. Wright and Mr C. G. Dunnet, of Culeenup I., Yundurup, that later in July there had been gales and floodings, during which part of the sand island had been inundated and the eggs washed away.

On September 8 I visited the island, with Dr Wilhelm Meise, of Hamburg. The Pelicans had laid again higher up the crest of the islet. We counted 65 adults but did not make too close an approach as we did not wish to disturb the birds unduly. The incubating birds were all on eggs and no chicks were visible. On September 15 I visited the island with Professor J. A. Keast. There were 33 nests—7 nests each contained 2 eggs; one nest had one egg and one chick; 13 nests had one chick, and 12 nests had 2 chicks. About 36 adult birds were present, very placid and they scarcely moved off as we approached. Most of the chicks were very small, evidently hatched during the week, though one or two were obviously older. On October 1 we (Mr A. G. Mathews, Mrs Geraldine Gregory and I) inspected the island with Messrs Phil Bodeker and D. Tapper of the "Daily News". Most of the young birds, now much more advanced, and covered with white down, crowded into a creche as we approached. About 30 of these young were counted. There were about 30 nests recognisable. In one nest was an egg and chick, 6 nests each contained one chick, one nest had 2 chicks, one had one egg, and one had 2 eggs. The adult birds returned very rapidly to the nesting area as we withdrew.

On October 12 the nesting site was visited by Brian Hutehison, A. G. Mathews, K. Flanagan and W. Meeham. All the chicks were in a creche and 41 were counted. The nests were unoccupied. Two dead chicks were noticed and one addled egg. The individuals in the creche moved off into the water as the visitors approached and were then herded back by the parents when the visitors left. All the chicks were downy but two or three were feathered, with brown backs. None could fly. Food regurgitated by